



Macrotis lagotis, *Woolly-belted*

MACROTIS LAGOTIS, *Gould*

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ONYCHOGALEA FRÆNATA, Gould.

Bridled Nail-tailed Kangaroo.

Macropus frænatus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part VIII. p. 92.—Ib. Mon. of Macropodidæ, pl. .—Waterh. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 77.

Onychogalea frænata, Gray, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 88.

THE large ears, full eyes, delicate limbs and lengthened tail of the *Onychogalea frænata*, conjoined with the soft grey fur of its face and body, beautifully relieved by diverging lines of black and white, render it one of the most graceful objects that can be conceived. In its disposition it is timid, peaceful and shy in the extreme, and the faculty of hearing, as indicated by the great development of its ears, being remarkably acute, it is exceedingly difficult to procure. It is a native of the south-eastern portions of Australia, and the locality nearest to the colony of New South Wales in which I observed it was Brezi, on the river Mokai, whence it extended into the interior as far as I had an opportunity of proceeding; Mr. Gilbert subsequently discovered that it was common in the thick patches of scrub which are dispersed over all parts of the Darling Downs. It inhabits all the low mountain ranges, the elevation of which varies from one to six hundred feet, and which are of a sterile character—hot, dry, stony, and thickly covered with shrub-like stunted trees. These situations are also the abode of the *Halmaturus dorsalis*, with which I sometimes found the *Onychogalea frænata* associating; but it differs from that species, which is strictly an inhabitant of the brushes, in frequenting the more open parts, and occasionally even the plains. When started from its seat, which is formed like that of a hare, beneath the shelter of a tuft of grass or a small bush, it bounds away with remarkable fleetness, generally giving the best dogs a sharp run, and frequently making its escape by gaining the thick part of the brush, or the hole of a decayed tree; one of those I procured, on being sharply pressed, mounted the inside of a tree, to an opening nearly fifteen feet from the ground; whence it leaped down before the dogs and succeeded in reaching the hollow of a fallen trunk, from which it was finally taken by the hand.

In the neighbourhood of Brezi the natives hunt this species with dogs, and often kill it with spears, bommerengs and other weapons; at Gundermein on the Lower Namoi I found myself among a tribe of natives who succeed in capturing them with nets, which, although rudely constructed, are very well adapted to the purpose. On being made acquainted with my object, they were easily induced to accompany me to a “Brigaloe brush,” in which the present species and the *Halmaturus dorsalis* were very abundant. Arriving at the skirts of the brush, the oldest men of the tribe separated from the rest, each two taking a net about twenty-five yards long by three and a half feet wide, with which they proceeded to those parts where the runs of the animals were most frequent, while the rest of the natives entered the brush on the opposite side, and with loud shouts and yells drove the Kangaroos towards the nets; by this means in a single afternoon they obtained for me as many specimens as I desired.

Its food consists of grass and various kinds of herbage, and its flesh, like that of the other small Kangaroos, is excellent, and when procurable was eaten by me in preference to other meat.

Some diversity of colour is found to occur in examples from different localities; those obtained by Mr. Gilbert on the Darling Downs being of a much browner hue than those I procured on the Mokai and Namoi.

Fur short and soft, general tint grey, being finely penciled with black and white; under surface of the body and inner side of the limbs white; on the cheeks a white mark, beneath which is a dusky line; ears clothed externally with grey hairs, edged with black at the apex and lined internally with white hairs;

muzzle blackish in front of the eye; from the occiput two conspicuous white marks run backward, and diverging, pass one on each side over the shoulder, and recurve at a short distance behind the insertion of the fore-leg; the space between these lines is black on the occiput, and brownish black on the back of the neck; sides of the neck suffused with pale ochreous yellow; tarsi and arms nearly white; hands and toes dusky, but most of the hairs round the nails of the former white; tail coloured like the body at the base, but black along the upper surface of the apical third, and at the point where the hairs being longer than elsewhere, hide a small horny tubercle with which the tail is terminated; under surface of the tail dirty yellowish white.

The female is not distinguished by any difference in marking; the stripes are quite as intense as in the male, and are even apparent in the foetus.

Considerable variation occurs in the weight of individuals, and particularly in the size and weight of the sexes, fully adult males weighing from ten to twelve pounds, while the females do not exceed four or six.

The following are the admeasnrements of the largest specimens I have seen; ordinarily they are about one-fifth smaller :—

	Male.		Female.	
	feet.	inches.	feet.	inches.
Length from the nose to the root of the tail	3	7½	2	8½
„ of the tail	1	7	1	3
„ „ tarsus and toes, including the nails	0	6½	0	5
„ „ arm and hand, including the nails	0	5	0	4
„ „ face from the tip of the nose to the base of the ear . .	0	3¾	0	3½
„ „ ear	0	3½	0	3¼

The Plate represents a male about three-fourths of the natural size.